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HOUSE BILL 2520

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State of Washington

60th Legislature

2008 Regular Session

By Representatives Schual-Berke, Hudgins, Pedersen, Dickerson, Hasegawa, Walsh, Campbell, VanDeWege, Liias, Barlow, Green, and Kelley

Prefiled 01/07/08. Read first time 01/14/08. Referred to Committee on Early Learning & Children's Services.

1 AN ACT Relating to creating a domestic violence pilot program to  
2 colocate a domestic violence advocate in a department of social and  
3 health services office; adding a new section to chapter 74.13 RCW; and  
4 providing an expiration date.

5 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

6 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** A new section is added to chapter 74.13 RCW  
7 to read as follows:

8 (1) By January 2009, the department of social and health services  
9 shall create a pilot program to place a full-time domestic violence  
10 advocate in a minimum of one office of the division of children and  
11 family services.

12 (2) The purpose of the program is to provide domestic violence  
13 safety planning, advocacy, information, and support to adult victims of  
14 domestic violence who are receiving services from the division of  
15 children and family services offices, and to increase the capacity of  
16 division of children and family services workers to identify and  
17 respond effectively to domestic violence in their caseloads.

18 (3) The goals of the program are to:

- 1 (a) Increase the safety of children and adult victims of domestic  
2 violence who are involved with the department's child protective  
3 services division;
- 4 (b) Increase the adult domestic violence victim's understanding of  
5 available domestic violence resources and supports;
- 6 (c) Increase the adult domestic violence victim's and the domestic  
7 violence perpetrator's understanding of the effects of domestic  
8 violence on children;
- 9 (d) Provide consultation and training to child protective services  
10 social workers so that they may increase their knowledge of domestic  
11 violence and practice skills for addressing domestic violence in their  
12 caseloads, and provide safe, effective responses for children and their  
13 families experiencing domestic violence;
- 14 (e) Decrease the rate at which victims of domestic violence are  
15 referred back to the division of children and family services;
- 16 (f) Decrease the number of children of domestic violence victims  
17 that are placed in protective custody;
- 18 (g) Improve the ability of division of children and family services  
19 social workers to accurately identify the full spectrum of abusive and  
20 coercive tactics that are utilized by domestic violence perpetrators,  
21 and their impact on children's safety and well-being, as well as the  
22 way they disrupt or undermine the parenting practices of adult victims  
23 of domestic violence;
- 24 (h) Improve the ability of division of children and family services  
25 social workers to identify the range of strategies employed by adult  
26 domestic violence victims to support the safety and well-being of their  
27 children;
- 28 (i) Increase the strategies available to division of children and  
29 family services social workers to hold the domestic violence  
30 perpetrator accountable for abusive and coercive behavior and its  
31 adverse impact on children;
- 32 (j) Increase the ability of division of children and family  
33 services social workers to accurately identify the domestic violence  
34 perpetrator as the person responsible for the adverse impact of  
35 domestic violence on children;
- 36 (k) Strengthen collaborations between department staff and  
37 community providers and resources; and

1 (1) Conduct an evaluation of the program by comparing the outcomes  
2 of the program office to the outcomes of a comparison office that does  
3 not have the domestic violence advocate, and to develop a report of the  
4 findings and recommendations that may be used to replicate the program  
5 statewide.

6 (4) The department shall convene an advisory group at the program  
7 site to provide advice on the implementation and progress of the pilot  
8 program. The advisory group shall include representatives from a local  
9 domestic violence agency, public health, domestic violence  
10 perpetrator's treatment program, protection order programs, law  
11 enforcement, the Washington state coalition against domestic violence,  
12 and others who are appropriate for the advisory group.

13 (5) The department shall utilize a request for proposal process and  
14 shall select the pilot site by September 2008. The request for  
15 proposal shall require:

16 (a) The community-based domestic violence agency to have experience  
17 providing domestic violence shelter or advocacy services under chapter  
18 70.123 RCW, and experience working with families involved with child  
19 protective services or child welfare services.

20 (b) The agency must be willing to commit to the following:

21 (i) Involvement in the program for the duration of the program;

22 (ii) Providing the employee who will be the domestic violence  
23 victim advocate located at the department office;

24 (iii) Agree to supervise and support the advocate placed into the  
25 department office;

26 (iv) Collaborate with the division of children and family services  
27 program supervisor at the program site; and

28 (v) Participate in the evaluation of the pilot program.

29 (c) The domestic violence advocate shall provide the following  
30 services while colocated at the department office:

31 (i) Provide on-site education, consultation, and support to  
32 division of children and family services staff to meet the needs of the  
33 children and families involved in domestic violence situations on  
34 subjects including, but not limited to:

35 (A) Identifying indicators of domestic violence;

36 (B) Interviewing techniques that do not increase the risk of danger  
37 to the adult victim of domestic violence or the child;

1 (C) Identifying protective behaviors that may reduce the risk of  
2 harm to the adult victim or the child;

3 (D) Determining risks posed by an alleged domestic violence  
4 perpetrator to the adult victim or the child; and

5 (E) How to refer victims to a domestic violence advocate;

6 (ii) Provide advocacy services to facilitate linkage to appropriate  
7 community supports for families receiving services from division of  
8 children and family services offices;

9 (iii) Participating in child protective services unit meetings,  
10 case reviews, or child protection team meetings, for families with  
11 identified domestic violence concerns; and

12 (iv)(A) Provide general information to department workers regarding  
13 domestic violence issues such as battering tactics, resources, and  
14 safety planning development. It is not the role of the advocate to  
15 provide information or training to department workers on specialized  
16 areas of child welfare practice such as risk assessments.

17 (B) Further, the domestic violence advocate shall not provide case  
18 consultation services to any family to whom they are providing direct  
19 advocacy. The domestic violence advocate may not provide direct  
20 advocacy services to any family on whose case they have provided  
21 consultation.

22 (6)(a) The department shall select a pilot program site in which  
23 the supervisor who will work with the pilot program in the division of  
24 children and family services office has formal training and experience  
25 working with families affected by domestic violence and child  
26 maltreatment and who has participated in best practices work groups for  
27 domestic violence issues.

28 (b) The supervisor's duties include the following:

29 (i) Ensuring that the domestic violence advocate has the support  
30 necessary to implement advocate-specific portions of the program;

31 (ii) Ensuring that children and family services social workers  
32 receive ongoing training regarding domestic violence;

33 (iii) Ensuring appropriate case investigation, documentation, and  
34 planning in cases involving domestic violence that accurately hold  
35 domestic violence perpetrators responsible for the adverse impacts of  
36 their behavior on the children, increases children's and victim's  
37 safety, identifies and builds on adult domestic violence victim's  
38 strengths, and holds abusers accountable;

1 (iv) Convening case staffings which include the domestic violence  
2 advocate; and

3 (v) Providing consultation to the case workers regarding  
4 appropriate interventions for the adult victim, the child, and the  
5 alleged domestic violence perpetrator.

6 (7) Provision of services by a domestic violence advocate under  
7 this section does not waive or diminish the confidential or privileged  
8 nature of communications between a victim of domestic violence and  
9 advocate pursuant to RCW 5.60.060, 70.123.075, or 70.123.076.

10 (8) The Washington state institute for public policy shall evaluate  
11 the pilot program to determine the outcomes of the program.

12 (a) Beginning in October 2008, the institute shall conduct a  
13 preprogram assessment. The preprogram assessment shall include a  
14 comparison of the program site to a division of children and family  
15 services office that does not contain a domestic violence advocate  
16 colocated at the site.

17 (b) Following the preprogram assessment, the institute shall  
18 conduct an evaluation of the pilot program, which includes a comparison  
19 of the program and nonprogram sites to determine the following  
20 outcomes:

21 (i) Changes to the rate of being referred back to child protective  
22 services intake for domestic violence related concerns;

23 (ii) Whether there are documented safety assessments that identify  
24 domestic violence safety risk factors for the children and the adult  
25 victim of domestic violence;

26 (iii) Whether there are documented service plans with strategies  
27 that address and mitigate identified domestic violence safety risks;

28 (iv) Whether there is an increase in the ability of the adult  
29 victims of domestic violence to identify safety risks and adverse  
30 impacts of domestic violence on the children;

31 (v) Whether there is an increase in the adult domestic violence  
32 victim's access to resources available to them within the community to  
33 increase the safety and security for themselves and the children;

34 (vi) Whether there is an increase in the ability of the perpetrator  
35 of domestic violence to identify and understand the adverse impact of  
36 the abusive and coercive domestic violence behaviors on their children;

37 (vii) Changes to the rate of children of adult domestic violence

1 victims placed into protective custody in the program office compared  
2 to the comparison site at the end of the three-year pilot program  
3 period;

4 (viii) Whether there is an increase in the knowledge of division of  
5 children and family services caseworkers regarding response to domestic  
6 violence in the child protective services caseload;

7 (ix) Whether the capacity of the social worker to accurately  
8 identify domestic violence perpetrators as responsible for the negative  
9 consequences of domestic violence increases and is reflected through  
10 case plans, who is the target of investigations, and against whom  
11 findings are made; and

12 (x) Whether the focus on the perpetrator will cause division of  
13 children and family services social workers to develop service plans  
14 and strategies for the perpetrator with the aim of reducing child  
15 neglect or abuse risks caused by the perpetrator's domestic violence  
16 behaviors.

17 (c)(i) The institute shall use the results of the evaluation to  
18 identify the effectiveness of the program including effectiveness of  
19 training, consultation, and advocacy services, changes in social worker  
20 practices, improvements in services to families, barriers to  
21 implementing program services, and service gaps for families affected  
22 by domestic violence.

23 (ii) The evaluation shall include recommendations to the department  
24 for improving domestic violence responses in other division of children  
25 and family services community offices of Washington state.

26 (d) The institute shall report the findings of the program to the  
27 appropriate committees of the legislature by December 1, 2011.

28 (9) This section expires January 1, 2012.

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